

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of processing active wireless device
2 statistics, the method comprising:
3 receiving statistics on the number of
4 active wireless devices in at least one
5 communications cell;
6 estimating the number of people in a geographic region of
7 interest from the received statistics on the number of
8 active wireless devices.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving statistics
2 includes:
3 receiving information from a plurality of different
4 communications cells, said information including at a
5 first count corresponding to the number of active devices
6 in a first communications cell and a second count
7 corresponding to the number of active devices in a second
8 communications cell.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein estimating the number
2 of people in a geographic region of interest includes:
3 correlating the first and second counts
4 corresponding to the first and second communications
5 cells, respectively, to the geographic area of interest
6 to generate a set of target area statistics including an
7 estimate of the number of active wireless devices in the
8 geographic area of interest.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein estimating the number
2 of people in a geographic region of interest includes:

3 performing an extrapolation operation on the
4 estimate of the number of active wireless devices in the
5 geographic area of interest to produce the estimate of
6 the number of people in the geographic area of interest.

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1 5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2 generating a report including the estimate of
3 the number of people in the geographic area of interest;
4 and

5 outputting said report.

1 6. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2 predicting the distribution of the estimated
3 number of people in a geographic region of interest from
4 the received statistics on the number of active wireless
5 devices.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein active device counts
2 from different wireless communications cells each at
3 least partially overlapping said geographic area of
4 interest are used in predicting the distribution of the
5 estimated number of people.

1 8. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

2 generating a report including the estimate of
3 the number of people in the geographic area of interest

4 and information on the predicted distribution of the
5 estimated number of people.

1 9. The method of claim 2, wherein the first count is a
2 count of a first type of wireless device and said second
3 count is a count of a second type of wireless device
4 which is different from said first type.

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3 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the first type of
4 wireless device is a cell phone and the second type of
5 wireless device is a personal data assistant.

1 11. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 predicting characteristics of the people in the
3 geographic region of interest from the type and number of
4 active wireless devices in the geographic region of
5 interest.

1 12. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step
2 of:

3 generating a report including the estimate of
4 the number of people in the geographic area of interest
5 and information on the predicted characteristics of the
6 people.

1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of
2 receiving statistics on the number of active wireless
3 devices includes:

4 receiving active wireless device statistics
5 corresponding to different points in time; and
6 generating, from received active wireless
7 device statistics corresponding to at least two different
8 points in time, information on the flow of traffic in the
9 geographic region of interest.

14. A method of generating a traffic flow report, the
method comprising the steps of:

1 collecting active wireless device statistics
2 from a communications cell over a period of time; and
3 detecting changes in the collected active
4 wireless device statistics; and
5 generating a report including traffic flow information
6 based on detected changes in the collected active
7 wireless device statistics.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the detected changes
include at least one of an increase and a decrease in the
number of active wireless devices in a communications
cell.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the detected changes
include changes in the identity of the active wireless
devices being serviced by the cell.

17. An apparatus for estimating the number of people in
a geographic region, the apparatus comprising:

3 an interface for receiving an active wireless
4 device count from at least one communications cell;
5 means for estimating based on the received
6 active wireless device count the number of people in a
7 geographic region including at least a portion of said
8 communication cell.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 17,
2 wherein said interface receives wireless device
3 count information including a first count corresponding
4 to a first communications cell and a second count from a
5 second communication cell; and
6 wherein means for estimating includes:
7 means for correlating the first and second counts
8 corresponding to the first and second communications
9 cells, respectively, to a geographic area of interest to
10 generate a set of target area statistics including an
11 estimate of the number of active wireless devices in the
12 geographic area of interest

1 19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said means for
2 estimating further includes:
3 means for performing an extrapolation operation on the
4 estimate of the number of active wireless devices in the
5 geographic area of interest to produce the estimate of
6 the number of people in the geographic area of interest.

1 20. A wireless communications system, the system
2 comprising:

3 a plurality of wireless communications centers,
4 each wireless communications center collecting statistics
5 on the number of active wireless devices being serviced
6 at a point in time;

a processing center coupled to the plurality of wireless communications centers, the processing center receiving from said wireless communication centers the statistics on the number of active wireless devices being serviced, the processing center including:

means for estimating the number of people in a geographic region of interest from the received statistics on the number of active wireless devices being serviced by said wireless communications centers.